



Charter Start Workshops

Marketing & Communications



Workshop Agenda

- Marketing Plan
- Messaging
- Targeted Marketing
- Media
- Public Relations
- Community Engagement

Marketing Plan

- What is marketing?
 - Everything you do to recruit and retain students
- Why communicate?
 - Tell your school's story
- Who needs to hear?
 - All stakeholders-parents, faculty, staff, board members, students, business leaders and community members
- How do you plan?
 - Marketing outline

Marketing Plan

- Current and Desired Positioning
- Vision and Mission
- Current Situation
- Goals and Objectives
- Target Audience(s)
- Organization Strengths and Weaknesses
- Competitive Environment
- Unique Value Proposition
- Strategies
- Messaging (for each target area)
- Tactics
- Budget/Timeline

Messaging

- Vision, mission, values alignment
- Communication
 - Channels
 - Process
 - Methods
 - Styles
- Internal and external focus
- 60 second elevator speech
- Talking points

Messaging

- Develop succinct, consistent description of school's philosophy, educational programs, and benefits answering
 - Who are we?
 - What do we stand for?
 - Why does it matter?
 - Where are we headed?
- Develop appropriate communication materials
 - Website
 - Email
 - Brochures
 - Newsletters
 - Print advertising

Targeted Marketing

- Data analysis
 - Surveys
 - Research
- Describe the area or market/district in which the school will operate
- Student population
 - What segment of the district's population do you plan to serve?
- Parent population
 - What is the demographic?

Targeted Marketing

- Economics
- Competition
 - What other school(s) are seeking the same student population?
 - Include private, public, magnet, parochial and other charter schools
- Business and Community Stakeholders
- Strategic Partners

Media

- Paid Advertising
 - Print (newspaper, magazine, community publications)
 - Radio
 - TV (network, local, cable)
 - Billboards, bus boards, etc.
- Unpaid coverage in print/radio/TV
 - Community events listings
 - Newsworthy items
 - Achievements
 - Events
- Unpaid advertising via Web/Email

Media

Periodically Evaluate Effectiveness

- Did your advertising achieve the intended outcome?
 - Ask prospects when/where/how they heard of your school
 - Track conversion rate of prospects to students
 - Ask donors when/where/how they heard of your school
- Fix what's not working
- Target your limited resources effectively

Public Relations

- Develop partnerships and provide value to parents, staff, faculty, board members and the public
- Public relations:
 - Promotes community input
 - Anticipates image problems and provides solutions
 - Handles publications including newsletter and website
 - Acts as key contact for media: writes press releases; works to get media coverage of school news
 - Designs objective, informational material for budget/bond issue campaigns
 - Designs all levels of communications, including writing a crisis communication plan
 - Conducts public relations research, surveys, and polls; interprets results
 - Creates avenues for student/staff recognition
 - Trains employees in the importance of public relations

Public Relations

- How to accomplish all of this?
 - Improve basic communications
 - Phone calls answered in courteous, friendly, helpful manner
 - Voice mail system is easy to use, calls are returned promptly
 - Meetings/school events publicized well in advance
 - Teachers and administrators accessible to parents and community stakeholders
 - Proactive communication with parents/public
 - Timely, relevant newsletter

Public Relations

- Develop well-defined crisis communication plan *prior to the crisis*
 - Understand the circumstances, define the problem
 - Keep faculty and staff informed first
 - Immediate written communication with parents including all facts and intended response
 - Single point of contact for media
 - Stick to facts, have them in writing
 - Be honest, but don't speculate
 - Never say something you don't want to see in print
 - Be calm and clear

Community Engagement

- To whom are we most accountable? Our stakeholders include:
 - Students
 - Parents
 - Board members
 - Broader community
- Engagement is a two-way street ...the school listens to parents and the community, communicates and reports to them about their charter school, and invites involvement in the school by its stakeholders

Community Engagement

- Listening to stakeholders may include:
 - Surveying parents to solicit input prior to making a major policy decision
 - Convening a series of parent/community forums chaired by board members to discuss a major challenge facing the charter school
 - Hosting monthly parent coffees to create informal opportunities to meet and hear concerns
 - Designing strategic planning process with ample opportunities for parent and community participation

Community Engagement

- Reporting to stakeholders may include:
 - Conducting a breakfast briefing for civic leaders describing school's unique educational programs and positive impact on student achievement.
 - Writing personalized letters to major donors thanking them for contributions.
 - Including monthly column authored by the board president in newsletter outlining key issues facing the school.

Community Engagement

Strategic Alliances, Partnerships, & Collaborations

- Mutually beneficial, well-defined relationship entered into by two or more organizations to achieve common goals, including:
 - Public-private partnerships
 - Joint initiatives with organizations with similar missions
 - Partnerships with community groups serving families from same target market as served by school
 - Contractual agreements with organizations to enhance the quality of education provided by school

Workshop Review

- Marketing Plan
- Messaging
- Targeted Marketing
- Media
- Public Relations
- Community Engagement

